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**aikorns**  
AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

# SHARING BIRDING

By Leslie Holzmann

**I**’M INTERESTED IN BECOMING A BIRDER. HOW CAN I get started?

The question was music to my ears. Who doesn’t love to share their passion with someone else? It wasn’t so long ago that I was a new birder, juggling a crummy pair of old binoculars with a mysterious field guide, all while trying (unsuccessfully) to keep an eye on the bird I was trying to identify. I’ve come a ways since those early days and even though I still have much to learn, I’m eager to pass on my limited birding skills.



PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN

Encouraging new birders isn’t just a way to stoke our more-knowledgeable egos. The more birders there are running around enjoying birds, the greater the support for conservation efforts aimed at maintaining healthy bird population. More birders means more access to birding locations, new birding trails, and an additional source of income for those who live in rural-but-birdy places.

It would be easy for me to give my friend a lecture on choosing proper optics, explain which field guide I think is the best, or preach the Birding Code of Ethics. Maybe I’ll eventually get around to each of these lessons. What I did tell her was where she can find lots of birders.

I invited her to Aiken’s monthly programs. They’re informative, full of enthusiastic people, and open to the general



PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN

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## PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

“I AM A BIRDER.”

In the tradition of addiction recovery programs I stand up and say “I am a birder.”

This revelation came one day while attending a meeting where, as an icebreaker, the moderator asked everyone to provide a tidbit of information about themselves that others may not know. When my turn came I mentioned that recently I discovered I owned nine birding field guides and three pairs of binoculars. At that moment the realization came that a simple hobby had grown into something more serious.

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### Coming programs

#### SEPTEMBER 19

Birding Together: How Birding Can Save Your Life and Maybe, Just Maybe, Save the World  
Presented by ABA President Jeff Gordon

#### OCTOBER 10

Birds of Southern Africa  
Presented by Risë Foster-Bruder

#### NOVEMBER 21

The Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival  
Presented by Debbie Barnes

#### DECEMBER

No program. See you on the Christmas Bird Count.

### Newsletter articles

Items and announcements of special interest to Aiken Audubon members are welcomed for consideration. We’d love to hear from you!

Deadline for the Nov./Dec. 2012 issue of *Aikorns* is Wednesday, October 17.

Contact the editor, Leslie Holzmann, at aikenaudubon@gmail.com, or call (719) 964-3197.

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## SEPTEMBER 19 / JEFF GORDON BIRDING TOGETHER: HOW BIRDING CAN SAVE YOUR LIFE AND MAYBE, JUST MAYBE, SAVE THE WORLD



**A**LVARO JARAMILLO HAS SAID THAT *if golf is a good walk spoiled, then birding is a good walk perfected.*

It's such a simple, compelling, positive message. But that positivity is something that birders as a community have relatively rarely managed to convey. Why is it that with as great a "product" to sell as the redemptive power of a passionate curiosity about nature and belonging to community of some of the most interesting, caring people anywhere, we've made so little traction with the wider public?

Join American Birding Association President and Colorado Springs resident Jeffrey Gordon for a celebration of the power of birding to heal and transform, not only our own lives but even our world.

## OCTOBER 10 / RISÉ FOSTER-BRUDER BIRDING SOUTHERN AFRICA

**N**AMIBIA AND BOTSWANA ARE WILD and spectacular countries with towering golden sand dunes, deep canyons, old granite mountains and shimmering plains surrounded by rich bush.

From the beautiful Namib Desert, the famous Etosha National Park, the Caprivi Strip and the Okavango Delta in Botswana, this program will deliver an African experience with birds and game amidst some of the most dramatic scenery imaginable.

Namibia is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. The lack of human intrusion gives visitors a chance to see Africa as it was 50 years ago. Both Namibia and Botswana offer some of the finest game and bird watching opportunities on the continent—without the crowds and traffic endemic to better known destinations like Kenya and South Africa. Come join us for an evening visit to the "Dark Continent."

**Note:** This program is on the *second* Wednesday of October.



PHOTO: RISÉ FOSTER-BRUDER

Lilac-breasted Roller

Aiken Audubon programs are free and open to the public. They are held at the Colorado State Division of Wildlife building located at 4255 Sinton Road. Coffee and socializing is at 6:30 pm and programs begin at 7 pm. Please use the back entrance. **NOTE:** Sinton Road runs parallel to I-25 on the east side, between Garden of the Gods Road and Fillmore Street.

### Aiken Audubon Board Members

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## Aiken Audubon Field Trips & Events

Everyone is welcome on Aiken field trips, regardless of experience level or membership in Audubon. Contact trip leader for details and to let them know you are coming. Don't forget to pack your binoculars, scope (if you have one), field guide, water, snack or lunch, hat, rain gear, sun screen, bug spray, camera(?), and some gas money for the drivers. No dogs are allowed on Aiken trips.

**Note:** In cases of extreme weather, trips may be cancelled. If this might be a possibility, please contact the trip leader an hour before the scheduled meeting time. To receive e-mailed reminders of upcoming field trips, send your name and e-mail address to [aikenaudubon@gmail.com](mailto:aikenaudubon@gmail.com).

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### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 7-10:30 AM** **FOUNTAIN CREEK FALL BIRD COUNT**

Beginning-to-advanced birders are invited to observe and record the numbers of bird species and populations found in Fountain Creek Regional Park during the height of the spring migration.

Reservations required, (719) 520-6745. Fee: \$5 donation for birdseed.

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### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1 - 3:30 PM** **INTERPRETIVE VOLUNTEER** **ORIENTATION**

Interpretive volunteers play a key role in providing visitor services at Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers. Come to this orientation at Fountain Creek Nature Center to learn more about volunteer opportunities and see if the nature centers are the right fit for your volunteer time. Volunteers must be 18 or older and complete an application.

Call Paula at (719) 520-6387 for an application. Reservations required.

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### **TUESDAYS, SEPTEMBER 11, 18, 25, &** **OCTOBER 2, 8:30 AM - 12:30 PM** **INTERPRETIVE VOLUNTEER** **PROGRAM LEADER TRAINING** **BEAR CREEK & FOUNTAIN CREEK NATURE CENTERS**

Enjoy the look of excitement and innocence in children's faces as you help them experience the fascinating outdoor world. Learn all about being a volunteer environmental education program leader at Bear Creek and Fountain Creek Nature Centers during these four training sessions. Volunteering also offers opportunities to meet new friends and help people enjoy their parks and nature centers while pursuing your own interests in our natural, cultural and outdoor recreation resources.

Contact Paula by September 8 at (719) 520-6387 for an application. Reservations required.

## More trips online!

For the latest information on field trips and events:

[www.AikenAudubon.com](http://www.AikenAudubon.com)



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### **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, ALL MORNING** **CHICO BASIN RANCH**

John Drummond will be leading this "fall migration special" trip to Chico Basin. In addition to migrants, other Chico specialties include thrashers, quail, towhees, waterfowl, raptors, woodpeckers, shrikes, and more. As an added bonus, the RMBO banding station will be open.

Scopes are very helpful for viewing the ponds. Bring a two-way radio if you have one.

To carpool, meet at the Woodmen & I-25 Park-n-ride at 7AM sharp, or join the group at the Hanover fire station on Peyton Hwy. at 7:45. The trip ends after lunch. Bring a snack or lunch to be eaten while birding.

Contact John at [jxdrummo@aol.com](mailto:jxdrummo@aol.com) for more information or to sign up. Reservations required; trip limited to 14 birders. There is a \$10 fee to bird at the ranch (\$15 if the group numbers fewer than 5).

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### **PINELLO RANCH TRIPS**

#### **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 7:30 - 10 AM**

Birds are beginning to move in September, and because fall migration is more spread out than spring there's an air of anticipation and no telling what me might see.

#### **OCTOBER 13, 8 - 10:30 AM**

Fall means ducks at Pinello Ranch! Seventeen different species of ducks that have been identified at Pinello, including Gadwall, American Wigeon, Wood Duck, Hooded Merganser, Mallard, Blue-winged Teal and Green-winged Teal are all possible.

**EACH OF THESE HIKES** will offer tips on identifying different species, and learning about behavior and habitat needs. The walking will be moderate but please plan on trail hiking. These are excellent opportunities for beginning birders.

Pinello Ranch is at 4940 S. US Hwy 85/87, CoSpgs, 80911. Cost: \$7 per person per trip. Groups limited to 12 birders. Visit [www.ppcf.org/impact/pinello-ranch](http://www.ppcf.org/impact/pinello-ranch) to register. Hikes will go rain or shine; no refunds will be given. Contact David Rudin, 719-648-9324, [drudin@ppcf.org](mailto:drudin@ppcf.org) if you have any questions.

# CHATFIELD RESERVOIR AT RISK

by Jackie Heyda

**C**HATFIELD STATE PARK IS A STATE PARK LOCATED in Douglas and Jefferson Counties of Colorado. The Audubon Society of Greater Denver operates the Audubon Center at the state park. The center is a nature education center that offers classes, workshops and bird trips.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board requested that the Army Corps of Engineers consider reallocation space within the Chatfield Reservoir for water supply purposes. Fifteen water users in the Denver metropolitan area have looked to the reservoir as a potential solution to store renewable surface water from Plum Creek and the South Platte River during low flow periods.

Strategic releases of water could provide recreational and environmental benefits to the urban and downstream reaches of the South Platte River while providing water during low flow periods. However, the reallocation project would also subject 587 acres of habitat to major changes from periodic flooding.

The proposed reallocation would raise the high water level up to 12 feet when water is stored during non-flood conditions. Water level fluctuations could increase both in magnitude and frequency. Environmental factors, such as water quality and wild

habitat and wetlands may be impacted, requiring mitigation on and off site.

After the required public comment period, the study will undergo revisions and a decision will be made on whether a reallocation would be feasible. This is anticipated in late 2012.

The Denver Post has printed a couple of articles on the project, from opposing views. See them at:

- [http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci\\_21082817/chatfield-reservoir-expansion-proposal-draws-criticisms-from-residents](http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_21082817/chatfield-reservoir-expansion-proposal-draws-criticisms-from-residents)
- [http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci\\_21331145/sound-water-project](http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci_21331145/sound-water-project)

*To find out more information about the proposed project, go <http://www.chatfieldstudy.org/>.*



## BROWNS CANYON UPDATE

By Jackie Heyda

Browns Canyon of the Arkansas River is being proposed as a wilderness area. Senator Mark Udall is proposing legislation to designate the area as the Arkansas River National Monument and Browns Canyon Wilderness. This designation would protect the BLM Wilderness Study Area and adjacent Forest Service roadless lands.

Browns Canyon is near Salida, Colorado and is known for its moderate elevation level for wildlife, whitewater, hunting and backcountry solitude. Elevations at Browns Canyon range from 7,300 to 10,000 feet. Pinon juniper trees dominate the arid lands along the river but Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine and aspen dominate as the elevation increases. Peregrine Falcons, Golden Eagles, Great-horned Owls have been seen.

A hike into the proposed wilderness is scheduled for Saturday, September 8 from 7AM to 6PM. **If interested in to register, contact John Stansfield, (303) 660-5849 or [jorestan@juno.com](mailto:jorestan@juno.com) by 5pm, Friday, September 7.**

## NATIONAL AUDUBON'S "TAKE ACTION!"

We know that lawmakers care about your views and opinions. As a constituent, you have a unique ability to convey your concerns about issues affecting birds, wildlife and their habitats. The only way we'll be successful in our conservation efforts is with your help.

The May/Summer 2012 issue of the Aikorns included guidelines for contacting your elected representatives. You can find their contact information at <http://www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml>

### CURRENT ISSUES INCLUDE:

- Protecting Cape Hatteras National Seashore
- Reauthorization of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act
- Congressional threats to the Clean Air Act

*Learn more and sign up at <http://policy.audubon.org/take-action>*

## MOVE SOME DIRT!

Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado is recruiting help to build a trail at Cheyenne Mountain State Park. The two-day project on September 8 – 9 will help build the trail to the top of Cheyenne Mountain. Volunteer for this or other projects at [www.voc.org](http://www.voc.org).

# VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES!

## EDUCATION CHAIR

Aiken Audubon Society is seeking an individual who would be interested in becoming the Education Chair. This would be an opportunity to work with fellow board members to develop programs to be used in presentations at schools, scout groups, various club meetings, etc. Contact our new Aiken President, Christine Bucher, if you are interested.

///Contact Christine at (719) 596-2916 or [baccab@aol.com](mailto:baccab@aol.com)

## CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Our new Conservation Chair, Jackie Heyda, is looking for conservation-minded individuals to join her committee. Activities include attending informational meetings, alerting our congressional representatives to bird-related legislation, and keeping Aiken aware of important issues. This is a significant opportunity to increase environmental awareness and ensure that the birds will still be there for our children's children.

///Contact Jackie at [jhmayl@yahoo.com](mailto:jhmayl@yahoo.com).

## Sharing Birding, continued from front page

public. Even better, they're free! For other opportunities, neighboring Audubon chapters welcome us, the Wild Bird Center has free monthly walks, and the county nature centers offer birding classes for older children and adults, plus outings for all ages.



PHOTO: LESLIE HOLZMANN

Then I told her to check out our website's list of field trips and sign up for at least one. I also mentioned that field trips are sponsored by our local nature center and by the folks at the wild bird store in town. There's nothing like getting out in the field with a bunch

of experienced birders ready to help you get a fix on that warbler, or navigate that confusing field guide.

Finally, I offered to go with her, both to the meeting and on the field trips. I remember how hard it was for me to brave that first trip. I was convinced that the old pros would laugh at my fumbling. Instead, they were generous with their time and attention. I want to pass on that kindness.

I don't know what kind of binoculars my friend owns, if any. If they aren't up to par, I'll arrange to borrow a pair from another birder. She probably doesn't own a field guide, but we can use mine. There's no rush to get all the accessories. What matters is discovering a world of wonder as close as the neighborhood park—or even in our own backyards. ☘

## President's Message, continued from front page

Since then I've added two more field guides, downsized by one pair of binoculars and upsized to a spotting scope.

This inventory may not seem a lot to the more serious birder, but all of us share a love of birds. It may be the simple joy of watching pygmy nuthatches fuss at each other while visiting a backyard suet feeder or the more exciting prospect of seeing a rare bird in a familiar setting. The far horizons beckon all of us to seek the "bird in the bush" ignoring the advice regarding the "bird in the hand."

I am honored to be elected to serve as President of the Aiken Audubon Society. Since my election, I've had the opportunity to review minutes from past board meetings and I am proud to be part of an organization that has been active for so long. The board and the committee chairmen will continue to work together on everyone's behalf to provide interesting and fun programs while promoting the importance of birds, their environment and birding in all its aspects to our community. We build on the past for a better future. Watch for opportunities to become involved and if you have ideas, questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact me.

"I am a birder." I hope this is an addiction from which I will never recover.

*Christine Bucher,*  
Aiken Audubon President

Coming Soon...

## THE AIKEN AUDUBON 2013 CALENDAR!

### FEATURING:

- /// Colorado Birds
- /// The work of Aiken photographers
- /// Aiken-related reminders
- /// Professionally printed and ready to hang
- /// On sale this fall



Look for the  
Aiken Audubon Society  
on Facebook!

[facebook.com/pages/Aiken-Audubon-Society](https://facebook.com/pages/Aiken-Audubon-Society)



## AIKEN AUDUBON SOCIETY

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President Christine Bucher

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You do not have to be a member to participate in Aiken's activities.

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# **RIO GRANDE VALLEY BIRDING FESTIVAL**

by *Leslie Holzmann*

**D** ID YOU HEAR? THERE'S A GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER AT FONTERA! AND THERE'S a Rose-throated Becard at Estero Llano... and an Anna's Hummingbird at Sabal Palms, a Rufous Hummingbird at Estero... a Crimson-collared Grosbeak at Fontera... a Black-vented Oriole at Bentsen...

Birding the Rio Grande valley is like nowhere I've ever been. You could spend your entire trip chasing rarities from site to site. I overheard one man commenting that he'd seen four rare birds in one day. Where else can you do that?

Last winter, my husband and I spent five days in South Texas, visiting all the sites and repeatedly running into the same friendly birders. Everyone was so helpful, pointing out hard-to-spot specialties (such as the Common Pauraque), telling me where to find the birds I most wanted to see, and rescuing me when I got hopelessly lost in the Frontera Audubon

Thicket in Weslaco. The tropical weather was also a nice change from the cold at home.

You can visit south Texas on your own, or you can sign up for the Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival, held in Harlingen every November. This year, the festival runs from November 7 through 11. Besides the exemplary speakers, incredible birds, and thrilling field trips, you'll recognize a number of Aiken birders who are planning to attend. Spots are filling quickly, so register as soon as possible.

/Go to <http://www.rgvbf.org> to learn more and to sign up.



*The Green Jay will likely be the first bird you see.*